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MAX KLINGER'S STATUE OF BEETHOVEN

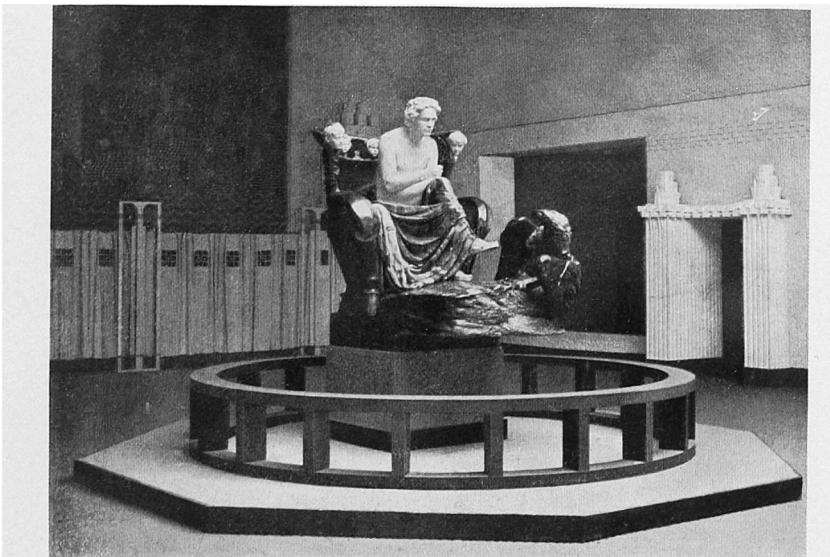
One of the most notable art events of the year on the Continent is the exhibition, in connection with the fourteenth display of the Vienna "Secession," of the remarkable statue of Beethoven by Max Klinger.

This is in every sense a most important work, and despite certain radical peculiarities of treatment, is well worthy of the enthusiastic praise bestowed upon it by critics and art lovers. Unconventional in conception, faultless in execution, it is one of those remarkable productions that arrest and hold the attention by sheer force of intrinsic merit. There is small cause for wonder, therefore, that since the exhibition was opened the statue has been the main topic of discussion in the ateliers and clubs of the Austrian capital.

It was thought fitting that a work so commanding should be accorded a setting unlike that which is given to the average run of works of art. In most exhibitions the problem has been to co-ordinate the different contributions in such a way as to harmonize the various features, and at the same time to prevent any one exhibit being so unduly emphasized as to cast other exhibits into the shade. In this year's exhibition of the "Secession" in Vienna, on the other hand, the contrary policy was adopted. The Beethoven statue was



DECORATIVE WALL PAINTING
By Gustav Klimt



BEETHOVEN — GENERAL AND SIDE VIEWS
By Max Klinger

regarded as so immeasurably superior to any other of the contributed art works that it was thought both just and expedient to subordinate everything else to this masterpiece.

To this end the statue is given a central exhibition room by itself, a room specially designed both by its architectural lines and its mural decorations to afford a suitable place for the display of Klinger's work. This central room is *the* room of the exhibition, and in many senses its monumental, austere, almost repellent features are no less remarkable than the impressive piece of statuary the chapel-like inclosure is meant to house and emphasize.

By common assent the statue is one of the finest pieces of technical manipulation ever displayed in continental exhibitions. What is more, it is not one of the works of which a few moments' inspection suffices. The oftener one sees it, and the more closely one examines its various details, the greater is its wonder. On it the Leipsic sculptor, Max Klinger, has spent the labor of fifteen years. The materials alone for the work cost one hundred and fifty thousand marks, and in view of this initial cost, and of the years of incessant toil required for the execution of the statue, the price of four hundred thousand marks asked by the artist for the finished work seems reasonable enough.

The master of music thus commemorated is represented seated on a massive bronze throne-chair, whose sides and back are decorated with symbolic figures. The form of the musician is nude but for a robe loosely and gracefully draped over the knees. In posture the figure is somewhat crouching. But the impression imparted is that of the greatest mental concentration, and of indom-



BEETHOVEN—BACK OF CHAIR.
By Max Klinger



FRESCO PAINTING
By Elena Luksch-Mekowsky

ing genius of his subject, with his powerful intellect and his poetic fancy, and he has sought to incorporate in his work all the dignity, mentality, and poetry that one naturally associates with this prodigy of music—a man who dreamed symphonies and sonatas, whose wondrous chords never reached his own soundless ears, music of such quality that, as the orator of the day said on the occasion of the unveiling of

itable energy. The face, modeled after a mask taken by Klein when the musician was living, is doubtless the most faithful likeness of Beethoven yet produced, expressing alike the master's intelligence, reflectiveness, and poetic character.

Grillparzer, the poet, in delivering a funeral oration over the dead musician, took for his text the words, "He was an artist, and he was what he was only through his art." Klinger, apparently, has taken a similar text, if one might be permitted to make use of such a phrase in connection with a work of sculpture. He has been impressed with the tower-



RELIEF IN BEATEN COPPER
By Maximilian Lenz

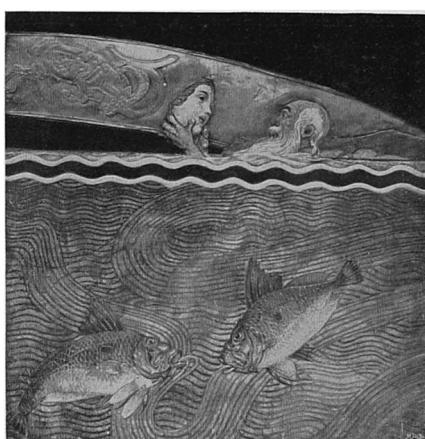
the first monument to Beethoven, in 1845, in Bonn, "a world wept at his grave."

The bowed form of the statue, the massive inclined head, and the sober, thoughtful countenance would suggest that the sculptor had seized a moment when the musician, deaf to the world, was thus listening to divine harmonies which it was his function to record that others might hear.

At first blush one is somewhat repelled by the radical, unconventional treatment of the subject. There seems little excuse

for the nudity of the figure: the form is not one for the display of lines of beauty. It is massive, somewhat rotund, true to the life

for a man of generous proportions and advanced in years. One's first impression is, that nudity is the license of the sculptor, indulged in without sufficient reason, if not resorted to as a meretricious means of exciting interest. Even after close and sympathetic study one is inclined to believe that the figure would be more effective, more natural, and more pleasing were the shoulders and body draped in cloak or mantle. I might cite



FRESCO PAINTING
By Maximilian Lenz



RELIEF IN BEATEN COPPER
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DECORATIVE PANEL
By Frederick König

by way of comparison Houdon's celebrated statue of Voltaire—also seated, also inclined forward, and also designed by pose and expression to indicate the character of the subject. In Houdon's work a certain dignity and grace is imparted by the cleverly adjusted folds of the robe in which the figure is enveloped. And it is a question whether Klinger would not have enhanced the effectiveness of his statue had he been less radical in his treatment. Still there is room for differences of judgment. Certainly the massive form of the musician, by familiarity, loses its suggestion of the bath, and gains in impressiveness by repeated study.

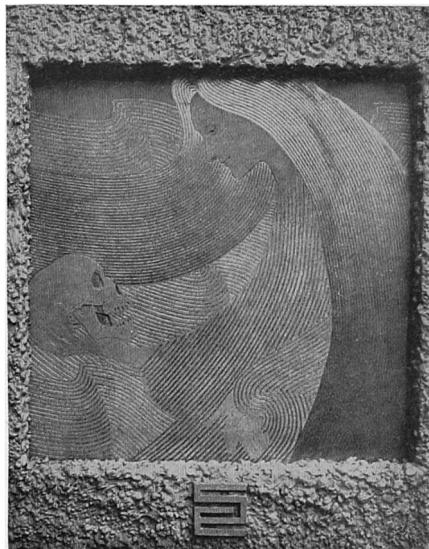
The photographic reproductions of the work, which I am able to send for use in BRUSH AND PENCIL, will convey to the reader a better idea of the statue than any verbal description, I can give. The piece is, as it was designed, eminently monumental and symbolical. So far as I know, it is wholly unlike anything ever attempted in the line



RELIEF IN BEATEN BRASS
By Maximilian Lenz

of commemorative statuary. In a sense it seems like a daring experiment brought to a successful issue. The mere combination of materials—a white marble statue, seated in an elaborate bronze throne-chair, with a life-sized eagle carved out of black marble at its feet—is a hazardous venture, before which an artist less skillful in his manipulations than Klinger might long have hesitated and faltered.

The further decoration of the chair with white marble angels' heads, which fringe the bronze work without any apparent reason, is an effort at decorative symbolism which lays the artist open to the charge of bad taste and bad judgment. But the nudity of the main figure, the black marble eagle, the white angels' heads, and the bronze bas-relief decorations of the throne-chair, all have their symbolic meaning, and however the judgments of critics may differ, it seems ill-advised, in view of the wonderful execution of the work, to quarrel



LINE DRAWING
By Ernst Stöler



DECORATIVE PANEL
By Ernst Stöler

with the artist over the selection of his materials or over his means of symbolism. The work is certainly one of the most remarkable pieces of statuary, both in conception and execution, which has lately been produced.

The exhibition room is equally unlike anything designed and equipped for a similar purpose. A chapel-like inclosure lighted from above, largely dominated by plain surfaces and harsh lines—practically the only curve being that of the ceiling—with comparatively few attempts at mural decoration, and these of a type so unusual, and to many so devoid of charm, as to be abortive of their purpose, the central room in which the Beethoven statue is shown on its raised dais is one that would impress the visitor by the element of the unusual rather than by that of the beautiful. Here, too, as is shown by the photographs of some of the decorations sent herewith, symbolism enters largely into consideration. This symbolism, however, is of the type that has found more favor with a certain class of German decorators than with the rank and file of decorators of other nationality. The frescoes, the panels, the bas-reliefs in brass and copper, the mosaics, the carvings, all savor of the unusual, the weird if not the repellent.

As an example of decoration, this central room is certainly consistent. Severe and strange as it is, it is not without its unique interest. Perhaps it comports with Klinger's conception of the subject. The average visitor, however, will doubtless feel a hiatus between the soulful character of the musician, who produced compositions of such wondrous beauty that the world still listens and admires, and this quasi-mortuary chapel, in the decoration of which the artists reveled in gruesome conceits, and while essaying to decorate, faltered before the first suggestion of beauty they produced, and abandoned the effort after grace to the mere chance of whim and oddity. The setting of the Klinger Beethoven is striking, that is all one cares to say of it.

FRIEDRICH MORGENTHAL.

VIENNA.



RECENT WORK OF ILLUSTRATORS—BLANCHE OSTERTAG

The following four illustrations are selected from a set of drawings made by Miss Blanche Ostertag for "Memories," by Max Müller, a volume soon to be published by A. C. McClurg & Co., and are used here by courtesy of the publishers, as examples of Miss Ostertag's most recent work. The task undertaken by the artist was not an easy one, owing to the peculiar character of the book.

The story is without plot, incident, or situations, though replete with interest, and abounding in beauty, grace, and pathos. These memories are a poem in prose on Deutsche Liebe, and are the later-